THE KUTB MINAR

(Delhi.)





R. N. Munshi.





THE HISTORY

OF THE

KUTB MINAR (DELHI.)

Being an Inquiry into its Origin, its Authorship, its Appellation and the Motives that led to its Erection,

FROM

The Testimony of the Mohmedan Chroniclers and the Inscriptions on the Minar.

BY

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IN TOKEN OF

THE HIGH ESTEEM AND REVERENCE IN WHICH HIS EXCELLENCY IS HELD BY THE PEOPLE OF THE BOMBAY PRESIDENCY

OWING TO

HIS EARNEST ZEAL AND SINCERE SYMPATHY FOR THE WELFARE AND HAPPINESS OF THE PEOPLE OVER WHOSE DESTINY HE FORTUNATELY PRESIDES

AND ALSO AS A MARK OF

RESPECT FOR HIS DEEP ERUDITION AND HIS ZEAL AND INTEREST IN THE CAUSE OF LITERATURE AND LEARNING

BY

HIS MOST GRATEFUL AND OBEDIENT SUBJECT AND SERVANT,

RUSTAMJI NASARVANJI MUNSHI.

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PREFACE

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ABOUT eleven months ago when I set myself to investigate into this interesting subject now before the public, Kutb Minar (Delhi) was known to me, as it is perhaps known to many even to-day, as the column raised by Kutb-ud-din, the first Turk Sultan of Delhi, in commemoration of his capture of that city from the Hindus in 1193 A. D. But having had to refer, during the course of my study on some other subject, to Miss Mabel Duff's (Mrs. W. R. Rickmers') Chronology of India, its page 184th arrested my attention. It runs thus[1] :—

"A. D. 1235-H.633, 24th Rabi I (7 December). Death of Khwaja Qutb-ud-din BakhtyarKaki of Ush near Bagdad, a famous Mohmedan Saint who came to Multan in the time of Nasir-ud-din Qabachah ; he subsequently went to Delhi where Altamash offered him the post of Shaikh-ul-Islam which he declined. *The Kutb-Minarah at Delhi was erected to his memory*."

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1 *Duff*, Chronology of India from the earliest times to the beginning of the Sixteenth century. (Lon : 1899), p. 184.

This certainly roused my curiosity to know and learn something more about the history of the Minar. This curiosity led me to a persistent research into the subject. I consulted many works adverting to the subject of my inquiry and attempted to go to the original sources so far as they were accessible to me through the courtesy of kind and well-meaning friends—especially the learned Shams-ul-ulma Ervad Jivanji Jamshedji Modi, B.A.

But handicapped by the absence of one single complete work on the history of the Kutb Minar serving as a short conspectus of the subject as a whole, I sought for information on the subject from the works of Mohmedan chroniclers contemporaneous with the age of the Kutb Minar as also of later historians. And in this branch of my inquiry, I was helped by Sir H. M. Elliot's excellent and exhaustive History of India. The chapter on " An Inquiry into the Authorship of the Kutb Minar from the Testimony of the Mohmedan Historians" has been prepared chiefly from this work. I have even included in this chapter

such of the contemporary Moslem writers as do not notice the *Minar* in their histories, with the object of recording as fully as possible the result of my inquiry to induce, if possible, critical and diligent investigators to a more minute research into truth.

Major General Sir Alexander Cunningham,[1] in his Archæological Survey of India, describes in about 100 pages the remains of Delhi. Out of these 100 pages, 16 are devoted to the *Kutb Minar*, 5 of which discuss its origin. And it is from this source that the materials of our chapter on the Origin of the Kutb Minar have been chiefly drawn. Than this no other work, that I have consulted, treats the subject more elaborately and in greater details.

Mr. W. Ewer[2] and Mr. E. Thomas's[3] contributions proved no less valuable so far as the epigraphic testimony was concerned.

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1 *Cunningham,* Archæolgical Survey of India. Four Reports made during the years 1862-63-64-65. Vol I, Simla-1871), pp. 132-201.

2 Asiatic Researches, Vol, XIV, (Cal : 1822). p. 480 et. seq.

3 *Thomas,* Chronicles of the Pathan Kings of Dehli (Lon : 1871) p. 21 et seq.

Though the inscription (marked E 4 in Ch. V and T1 in Ch. VI) over the door-way of the marble portion of the fourth story of the Minar attributes in distinct words the entire structure to the reign of Sultan Altamash, the son-in-law and successor of Sultan Kutb-ud-din, Mr. Thomas is disposed to think that it is so ascribed " with obvious error." But what that " obvious error" is he nowhere points out in his excellent work. That it is not with any "obvious error" that the Minar is attributed to the time of Sultan Altamash we have attempted to show in the following pages from the testimony of the Mohmedan historians and of the inscriptions themselves. There are, however, other histories and works of travels that only allude in passing to the Minar but without giving detailed information of any interest or use for the purpose of our inquiry.

"The History of the Kutb Minar (Delhi)," now offered to the public, is, therefore, I venture to presume, the first book of its kind ever published. In the whole literature of archæological history there is not to be

found any single complete work exclusively treating of the history of this magnificent Minar. It is, therefore, with a view to contribute to the archælogical history and literature an additional exclusive work on the history of this "highest column in the world"[1] that this book is written.

I studied the question with no little interest throughout, and from what I have read and learnt, I, at least, am convinced that it would be both unfair and inaccurate to say that Sultan Kutb-ud-din Aibak was the builder of the *Kutb Minar* simply because the name *Kutb* is coupled with this edifice. Moreover, none of the works that were consulted during the course of the preparation of this work, conclusively proves Sultan Kutb to be its builder. On the other hand, the consensus of opinion and testimony would be found to claim the rightful authorship of the Kutb Minar for Sultan Altamash, the son-in-law and successor of Kutb-ud-din.

1 *Elphinstone*, History of India, (Lon : 1905), p. 367.

The conclusions, that have been adduced after much reading and reflection on the subject, are here laid before the readers and the students of history for their careful consideration and healthy criticism.

It now only remains to perform the grateful task of expressing my thanks for the assistance received. It has been my constant aim to specify the sources from which I may have drawn my materials both with a view to make easy a reference to the original and to acknowledge my indebtedness to those sources.

My best thanks are due to my learned friend, Mr. Shaikh Faizullabhoy Shaikh Lukmanji Mulla, B. A., Fellow of the University of Bombay and the Head Master of the Anjuman i-Islam High School, Bombay, for the kind and prompt help I have received from him in the translations of some of the inscriptions. To some of my kind and sympathetic friends I also owe a debt of obligation for generally helping me during the course of the preparation and the printing of my book. To my friend,

Mr. Hoshung Tehmuras Anklesaria, I am particularly indebted for the zeal so kindly displayed by him while the book was in press and for his many valuable suggestions.

Bombay,
14th, November, 1911. } R. N. MUNSHI.

CHAPTER I.



Introduction.

THE Mohmedan rule in India is an important era in the history of the world, in the moulding of which the slaves from Tartary had their hands. This practice of promoting distinguished Turkish slaves to high rank and authority was introduced by Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni. Shihab-ud-din Mahmud Ghori was not slow to follow his example. He left his Indian dominions in sole charge of his favourite slave, Kutb-ud-din Aibak, whom he had bought from a merchant of Nishapur. Altamash succeeded him. He, too, was a slave whom Kutb-ud-din purchased at a high price and married to his own daughter. The relations between the father-in-law and the son-in-law were so thick and thin as to have led into a pitfall a Mohmedan historian who avers that Kutb called Altamash his own son.

Others who followed them constituted a dynasty known to us as the famous Slave Dynasty that ruled in India, Kutb being its celebrated founder. And the annals of India bear ample testimony to the fact that it was in nowise left poorer by their occupation of the country. It was nearly upto the XIIth century that the city of Delhi was in the occupation of the Hindus when it was snatched away from their hands by Kutb-ud-din in 1193 A. D. in his capacity as the Viceroy of India to Sultan Mahmad Ghori. Kutb-ud-din was the first Turk Sultan of Delhi and 34 Muslim kings, including Kutb, ruled there from the beginning of the XIIIth century to the invasion of Babar in 1526 A. D. Altamash, perhaps the greatest king of the Slave Dynasty, had by the time of his death in 1236 A. D., brought the whole province—Bengal, Rajputana and Sindh—under his authority and sway. It was he whose independence was first recognised by the Khalif of Bagdad, the overlord of Islam, a

dynasty which only a short time before had lost all but the semblance of power under the attack of the formidable Tartars. Some of those wonders in architecture at Delhi came into existence during the period of their occupation of the country.

The Buddhists are known to us as great tower-builders. Their successors;the Jains, also adopted the plan of erecting towers of victory, or to use the Buddhistic language, *Jaya Stambha*, to commemorate their exploits. But the most direct imitation was by the Chinese whose lofty pagodas are almost literal copies of the Jain towers. The Mohmedans, too, followed suit with the result that they excelled and surpassed their predecessors both in minuteness and magnificence which have from early times characterised their architecture.

Delhi, under the name of Indraprastha or Inderput, was one of the earliest Hindu capitals. Its foundation is attributed to Yudisthira at a fabulous antiquity of no less than 3000 years before the Christian era. It is, however, older

than all records and probably as old as Jerusalem. But as an historical city, it cannot be said to date earlier than the middle[1] of the XIth century when a Rajput king named Anangpala,[2] of the dynasty known in history as the Tomara Dynasty, built the *Lalkota* or the Red Fort in A. D. 1060.

India, on account of its magnificent architecture, has charms for the archæologist and the traveller alike. "The beauty and magnificence of the buildings erected by the sovereigns of Hindostan," says Lord Macaulay,[3] "amazed even travellers who had seen St. Peter's." But "by far the most interesting group of ruins that exist in India, or perhaps in any part of the world,"[4] is that grouped round the huge column of the Kutb. And in this connection we have the evidence

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1 *Vincent A. Smith*, Early History of India from 600 B. C. to the Muhammadan Conquest including the Invasion of Alexander the Great (Lon : 1904) p. 310.

2 Anangpala was the foundor of the Tomara Dynasty.

Lord Macaulay, Essays on Clive and Warren Hastings.

4 *James Fergusson*, Hand-Book of Architecture, Vol. I (Lon : 1855), p. 416.

of Bishop Herber who recorded that the Kutb Minar was the finest tower he had ever seen, though probably not knowing as to who its real author was and as to wherefore it was built, yet fully aware of the fact that it was certainly erected by the Mohmedans of India, for, to the European mind, everything exquisite in the science of architecture was Mohmedan.

It is, then, this Minar, so eulogistically spoken of, the history of which we have endeavoured to trace in the following pages, as read in the inscriptions on the Minar itself and as told by the Mohmedan historians. Therefrom we have adduced our own conclusions which we respectfully submit to the general readers as well as the students of history for their careful and dispassionate consideration.

CHAPTER II.

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The Kutb Minar-its measurements.

Measurement by Fergusson-by Blunt-by Cunningham-by Abbot-Abul Fida's testimony-Subsequent addition by Sultan Firoze-Reparation by Sultan Sinkander Lodi-by the Government of India.

"THE Minar is 48 ft. 4 in. in diameter at the base, and, when measured in 1794, was 242 ft. in height. Even then, however, the capital was ruined, so that ten or perhaps twenty feet must be added to this to complete its original elevation. It is ornamented by four boldly projecting balconies; one at 90, the second at 140, the third at 180, and the fourth at 203 feet from the ground; between which are richly sculptured raised belts containing inscriptions. In the lower story the projecting flutes are alternately angular and circular, in the second circular, and in

the third angular only; above this the minar is plain, but principally of white marble, with belts of the red sandstone, of which the three lower stories are composed."[1]

The Kutb Minar, as it now stands, is 238 feet and 1 inch in height, with a base diameter of 47 feet 3 inches and an upper diameter of nearly 9 feet. It is a tapering shaft divided into five stories and ornamented at intervals by bands and balconies. The Minar seems to have been measured by European travellers at different times. As early as April 1794, its height was measured by Ensign Blunt, an engineer, according to whose computation recorded in the Asiatic Researches[2], it was 242 feet and 6 inches high. According to Cunningham, it was 238 feet high in 1839, while in 1846, when Sir Frederick Abbot measured it, its height was 238 feet and 2 inches.

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[1] *James Fergusson*, Hand-book of Architecture, Vol. I, (Lon : 1855), p. 421.

[2] Asiatic Researches, (1799) Vol. IV, p. 314.

The following is the measurement of height between the stories as given by Cunningham[1] :—

	Ft.	In.
Upper storey	22	4
4th ,,	25	4
3rd ,,	40	9½
2nd ,,	50	8½
Basement storey	94	11
	234	1
Plinth	2	0
	236	1
Stump of old cupola	2	0
Total present height	238	1

Abul Fida, a celebrated geographer, who flourished at the end of the 13th and the beginning of the 14th century, had visited the minar twenty years prior to the accession of Firozeshah. He recognises the Minar as " the Mazinah of the Jami Masjid at Delhi."[2] He records that

1 Cunningham, Archæological Survey of India, Vol. I(Simla 1871) p. 196.

2 *E. Thomas*, Chronicles of the Pathan Kings of Delhi, Lon : 1871). p. 285 f. n.

it had 360 steps in its circular ascending stair-case. Now, considering that the utmost limit this monument is known to have reached under all subsequent additions is 379 steps—that is, 19 more than the computation of our geographer, and looking to the fact that the Minar—a portion whereof had been struck by lightning, was reparied by Firoze Shah in 1368 A. D., there is nothing improbable in the account of Abul Fida that the Minar in his time counted only 360 steps.

Out of the five storeys of the Minar, the top-most two which are of a later date are ascribed to Firoze Shah. This agrees with the statement of Firoze Shah himself who had repaired it in 1368 A. D. when it had been struck by lightning. He says—" The *Minara* of Sultan Muiz-ud-din Sam had been struck by lightning. I repaired it, and *raised it higher than it was before.*"[1] The Minar was also repaired by Shah Secunder Lodi in A. D. 1503, which restoration, according to Fanshawe,

1 *Sir H. M. Elliot*, History of India as told by its own Historians, Vol. III (Lon : 1871) p. 383.

" probably preserved the Minar till 300 years later.'"[1] But on the 1st of August 1803, the old cupola of the Kutb Minar was thrown down by an earthquake causing serious injury to the whole building. " About this time the dangerous state of the pillar was brought to the notice of the Governor General who authorized the necessary repairs to be begun at once. This difficult work was entrusted to Major Robert Smith, of the Engineers, and was completed by the beginning of the year 1828, at a cost of Rs 17,000, with a further charge of more than Rs. 5000 for clearing the ruins around the pillar."[2]

1 *H. C. Fanshawe*, Delhi-Past and Present, (Lon : 1902), pp. 265-66.

2 *Sir A. Cunningham*, Archæological Survey of India, Four Reports made during the years 1862-63-64-65, Vol. I (Simla : 1871), p. 199.

CHAPTER III.

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The Origin of the Kutb Minar.

Its supposed Hindu origin-Sir Sayyid Ahmad its advocate-Arguments of Cunningham and Ewer against it-Proofs of its Mohmedan origin.

THERE is a great deal of speculation as to the original builder of the magnificent minar, known to us as the well-known Kutb Minar. This column, which, according to Elphinstone is "the highest column in the world" is believed by some to be the work of Rai Pithora or Prithvi Raj by whom it is supposed to have been built for the purpose of giving his daughter a view of the River Jumna, or, according to another account, for obtaining the view of the River Ganges. This belief brings us to the question of the origin of the Kutb Minar as to whether it is a purely Mohmedan building, or, a Hindu building

[1] Elphinstone, History of India (Lon 1905) p. 367

altered and completed by the conquerors. In Sir Sayyid Ahmad, the Moonsif of Delhi, and the author of " A descriptive account[1] of the archæology of Delhi in Urdu ", آثارالصناديد, we have a strong advocate of the Hindu origin of the Kutb Minar. Some of the arguments brought forward in support of the Hindu origin of the Minar and the objections raised against it, are the following :—

(*a*) " That there is only one *Minar*, which is contrary to the practice of the Muhammadans who always give two Minars to their masjids."

Though this argument of Sir Sayyid Ahmad is not without foundation, for, for the last three hundred years, such has been the practice of the Mohmedans,

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1 Delhi, 1847, 8 vo. lithographed. The writer of the Literary Intelligence in the journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal (vol. XX 1851 p. 353) thus speaks of this work—" Though it is not free from mistakes, it may clear up many errors of even distinguished travellers and geographers."

Mr. Carr Stephen's Archæology of Delhi is mainly a translation of the well known work by Sir Syad Ahmad, the Asar-i-Sanadid.—Fanshawe, Delhi-Past and Present, preface p. X.

yet this fact should not be lost sight of that the early Mohmedans also used to build a single tower. As a proof of this latter practice, Cunningham points out the two Minars of Ghazni built by Muhammad in the early part of the 11th Century, that is, about 180 years prior to the erection of the Kutb Minar and the Koel Minar built in 1254 A. D. by Kutlugh Khan during the reign of Nasir-ud-din Muhammad. " These still existing Minars of Ghazni and Koel show that it was the practice of the early Muhammadans to have only one Minar even down to so late a date as the middle of the 13th Century." Cunningham thinks that the Kutb Minar was intended as a *Mazinah* of the Great Mosque of Kutb for the Muezzin to call the faithful to prayer.

(*b*) Sayyid Ahmad argues that if it was at all meant as a *Mazinah*, it would have been erected at one end of the Mosque, and not at some distance from it. Here again, the Director General of the Archæological Survey of India

points to the Koel Minar "which occupies exactly the same detached position with regard to the Jama Masjid of Koel as the Kutb Minar does with respect to the Great Mosque of Delhi. Both of them are placed outside the south-east corner of their respective masjids. This coincidence of position seems to me sufficient to settle the question in favour of the Kutb Minar having been intended as a Mazinah of the Great Mosque."

(*c*) Another argument is that in accordance with the Hindu practice the entrance door faces the north, whereas with the Mohmedans it faces the east. In reply to this objection of Sayyid Ahmad, the Koel Minar is again brought into evidence to show that the entrance door of this Minar also faces the north exactly as in the Kutb Minar. It should be borne in mind that the Koel Minar, as stated above, was erected by Nasir-ud-din, the son of Shams-ud-din Altamash. It might, therefore, be looked upon as an almost contemporary work. Cunningham believes that in both these

instances the entrance door was so placed chiefly for the convenience of the Muezzin when going to call the faithful to prayer. The entrance door in the Mohmedan buildings does not invariably face the east as Sayyid Ahmad thinks. Though the tomb of Sultan Altamash, which has its entrance door facing eastward, seems to be the solitary instance that should have led him to arrive at the above conclusion, there are the two great tombs of *Bahawal Hak and Rukn-ud-din* in Multan, and most other modern tombs or mausoleums, includiug the Taj Mahal, having their entrance door to the south, and not to the east. Moreover, Sayyid Ahmad is mistaken in suppossing that the entrance doors of the Hindu buildings face northward as it can be shown from Cunningham that out of the 50 temples of which he has a record no less than 38 have their entrance doors to the east, 10 to the west and only 2 to the north.

(*d.*) " It is customary for the Hindus", argues Sayyid Ahmad, " to commence such buildings without any platform (or

plinth), whereas the Muhammadans always erect their buildings upon a raised terrace or platform, as may be seen in the unfinished Minar of Aladdin Khilji." Cunningham, here too, finds fault with this statement. He points to the gigantic Buddhisht temple at Buddha Gaya, the two large temples in the Fort of Gwaliar, the elaborately sculptured temples of Kajraba, the great pillar at Chitar and most of the temples in Kashmir which all have plinths or platforms varying in height from 8 to 20 feet. From the drawings of mosques in Syria and Persia given in Fergussan's Hand-Book[1], it appears that the practice with the early Mohmedans does not accord with that of placing their buildings on raised platforms or plinths. The Minars at Ghazni are not built on plinths. The inference, therefore, is that the early Muslim structures in India were generally built without platforms.

Mr. Walter Ewer, too, in his paper on the Inscriptions on the Kutb Minar raises

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[1] Vol I, p. 415.

the following objections against the so-called Hindu origin of the Minar :—

" 1st. The three lower stories of the minar are externally generally built of the red stone, from the quarries of Futtehpur Sicri, and a considerable portion of the interior is constructed of the same material, which is not to be met with throughout the extensive Hindu ruins, which surround the tower on every side, and which are comparatively of great antiquity.

2nd. The entrance passage and staircase of the Cootub are both arched, thus exhibiting a knowledge of architecture in the builder, which the Hindus of that age did not possess. The small domes which remain entire among the Hindu ruins, are all built of stone, each a segment of a circle and each decreasing in area, and projecting over that beneath it, until the dome is completed, also the

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1 " An Account of the Inscriptions on the Cootub Minar " in Asiatick Researches, Vol. XIV. (Cal: 1822.) pp.480-89.

roofs of the arcades, are invariably formed of blocks of stone, extending from one pillar to the next."[1]

From the arguments of Sir Sayyid Ahmad in favour of the Hindu origin of the Kutb Minar and the objections raised against it by Sir A. Cunningham[2] and Mr. Walter Ewer[3] the Kutb Minar is presented before us as being essentially a Mohmedan building. Cunningham says "The building (Kutb Minar) is entirely a Muhammadan one both as to origin and to design."

We have seen that the name of a Hindu Raja is very erroneously associated by some with the Minar known to us as the Kutb Minar. But a *Stambh*, or a pillar of Rai Pithora or a Prithvi minar would surely be a mad absurdity. What reason or reasons can be assigned

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1 " An account of the Inscriptions on the Cootub Minar" in Asiatic Researches, Vol XIV (Cal. 1822) p. 485.

2 Sir A. Cunningham, Archæological Survey of India. Four Reports made during the years 1862-63-64-65 Vol I (Simla, 1871) pp. 190-194

3 Asiatic Researches, Vol XIV pp 480-89

to the building of this mighty Minar by the Hindu Raja? The name of the Kutb Minar which is traditionally handed down to us from posterity is a proof positive that the Minar is out-and-out a Mohmedan edifice.

CHAPTER IV.

An Inquiry into the Authorship of the Kutb Minar from the Testimony of the Mohmedan Historians.

Hasan Nizami, Ibn Asir, Juwaini and Ufi make no mention of *minar*—Shams-i-Siraj Afif ascribes it to Altamash—Firoze Shah's 'minara of Sultan Muiz-ud-din Sam'—Tabakat-i-Nasiri—Ibn Batuta—Babar—Ain-i-Akbari.

The Kutb Minar, therefore, was not built by the Hindu Raja Prithwi or Rai Pithora and the claim of the Hindus over it is, therefore, groundless. If it could not have been raised by the Hindus or one of their princes, as we have seen above at some length, it was a Mohmedan edifice. Who was, then, the builder of it? This brings us to the investigation of an interesting subject as to whom the erection of this magnificent minar, "the highest column in the world," can rightly be ascribed.

Now, who was, then, this *Mohmedan* who ordered the erection of the building? Was he Kutb ud-din Aibak, the Turk Sultan of Delhi, as the name by which this Minar is known to us would seem to suggest at the very first sight? Or, was it his son-in-law and successor, Sultan Shams-ud-din Altamash, whose name is connected by many with the Minar?

We shall now enter into the inquiry as to which of these two may be rightly held up as the actual builder of the Kutb Minar.

We shall take up this inquiry into the actual authorship of the Kutb Minar, *firstly*, from the point of view of those of the native historians of the Mussalman period whose works bear on, or advert to, the subject; and *secondly*, from the point of view of the inscriptions engraved on the Minar itself. The inquiry of this subject from these points of view will also help us to examine the motives that led to the erection of the huge column, and about which we shall speak at the proper place.

The historians of the Mussalman period

are all Mohmedans who notice in their chronicles the progress of the empire from their own stand-point. The majority of them, though they praise, admire and extol their patrons, also stigmatize many of the Sultans as a disgrace not only to the country over whose destinies they were called upon to preside, but even to human nature. So far, their accounts of the times in which they themselves flourished are impartial and fair and, therefore, trustworthy. It is this type of the historians whom we quote here. We shall see what they say in their works about the Minar.

The historians contemporaneous with Sultan Kutb-ud-din Aibak and Sultan Altamash are the following :—

(*a*) Hasan Nizami who was a contemporary of Kutb-ud-din Aibak and Altamash is the author of Taj-ul-Maasir (the Crown of Exploits), a celebrated work devoted chiefly to the history of Kutb-ud-din, but also containing portions of the history of his predecessor and his successor Altamash but without any notice of Aram, the son

and immediate successor of Kutb-ud-din. Hammer informs us that "Nizami of Lahore, a slave of Muhammad bin Sam, wrote this history of his master who being an admirer of the great achievements of Aibak, took them for the model and rule of his reign."[1] Taj-ul-Maasir opens with the transactions of the year 587 A. H. (1191 A. D.) and carries the history down to the year 614 A. H. (1217 A. D.) or seven years after the death of Kutb-ud-din Aibak.

In this work of Hasan Nizami, we do not find any reference to—much less any mention of—the Kutb Minar. The edifice which is ascribed to Sultan Kutb-ud-din is the great mosque at Delhi. Hasan Nizami thus refers to it :—

"Kutb-ud-din built the Jami Masjid at Delhi, and adorned it with the stones and gold obtained from the temples which had

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[1] It is strange how Hammer could have made this mistake. Muhammad bin Sam, who is no other than the famous Muhammad Ghori, died before his slave Kutb-ud-din Aibak reigned. How, then, could he have taken his own slave for his great examplar ?

been demolished by elephants, and covered it with inscriptions in Yoghra, containing the divine commands."[1]

(*b*) Ibn Asir who is known by his celebrated work, Kamil-ut-Tawarikh, or, Tarikh-i-Kamil as known to Persian writers, was born in 555A. H. (1160 A. D.). The work is chiefly valuable for its notices of the Ghaznivides and the Ghorians. Ibn Asir carries down his history to the decline of the latter dynasty. This work makes no mention of either the pillar or the mosque.

(*c*) Another contemporary history, "Tarikh-i-Jahan-Kusha" (History of the conquest of the world) of Alau-ud-din Juwaini better known to Europeans as Ata Malik Juwaini, which narrates the events up to the year 655 A. H. (1257 A. D.), seems to be silent over the subject that we are investigating.

(*d*) Maulana Nur-ud-din Muhammed 'Ufi lived at Delhi during the reign of Sultan Shams-ud-din Altamash. His work is well-known as "Jami-ul-Hikayat wa Lawami-ul-Riwayat" (Collections of Stories and Illus-

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1—Elliot, History of India, Vol II, (1869) P. 222.

trations of Histories). We find no mention of the Kutb Minar in the extracts that have been translated by Sir H. M. Elliot.[1]

(*e*) In his Tarikh-i-'Alai, Mir Khusru speaks of the edifices erected and repaired by Sultan Alaudin Khilji (1295–1316 A. D.) whom the author also styles Muhammad Shah Sultan and whose contemporary he was. Mir Khusru informs us that Sultan Alaudin Khilji "then resolved to make a pair to the lofty minar of the Jami Masjid, which minar was then the single (celebrated) one of the time, and to raise it so high that it could not be exceeded. He first directed that the area of the square before the Masjid should be increased that there might be ample room for the followers of Islam. He ordered the circumference of the new minar to be made double that of

1 *Elliot*, History of India, Vol. II, (Lon: 1869) pp. 157-203. About 'Ufi's work Sir H. Elliot says—'The next chapter is upon Justice, and all the rest are similarly devoted to the illustrations of some moral or intellectual quality. This arrangement, however well adapted to accomplish the object of the author, is particularly perplexing to those who are seeking for historical or biographical notices, and a long and laborious search is necessary to find any anecdote which has not been carefully noted down.'—Ibid, p. 156.

the old one, and to make it higher in the same proportion, and directed that a new casing and cupola should be added to the old one''.[1]

(*f*) Tarikh-i-Firoze Shahi, or the History of Sultan Firozeshah (A. D. 1351—A. D. 1388), of Shams-i-Siraj Afif has a reference to "the large pillar in the Masjid-i-Jama at old Delhi,"[2] raised by Sultan Shams-ud-din Altamash as was then the practice with every great king to set up some lasting memorial of his power. On the same authority[3], we have it that Amir Timur had, during his stay of some days in Delhi, inspected all the monuments of former kings.

(*g*) We now come to the Fatuhat-i-Firoze Shahi (the Victories of Firoze Shah), a small work written by Sultan Firoze Shah himself and containing a brief summary of the *res gestæ* of his reign. In the list, which he gives in his above mentioned production,

1. Elliot's History of India, Vol. III, (1871) pp 69-70
2. Elliot, History of India, Vol. III, (1871) P. 353
3. Ibid.

of the edifices and structures of former kings and ancient nobles which he repaired and rebuilt, we find the following :—

"The minara of Sultan Muizz-ud-din Sam had been struck by lightning. I repaired it and raised it higher than it was before."[1]

Had this minar been then known by the present appellation with which it is now known to us, namely, that of the Kutb Minar, Sultan Firoze Shah would have assuredly called it so. The reader is referred to the list[2] of edifices repaired by Firoze Shah wherein that Sultan ascribes the edifices he repaired to their proper original builders ; for example, Hauz-i-*Shamsi* or tank of *Altamash* ; Hauz-i-*Alai* or tank of *Alaudin*; Madresa (College) of *Altamash*; Tomb of *Rukn-ud-din*, son of Altamash ; Tomb of Sultan *Jalal-ud-din* and so on.

1 Elliot's Historians, III. 383.

2 Ibid.

For public works constructed during the reign of Firoze Shah Tughlak (A. D. 1351-1388) vide Briggs' Ferishta (Calcutta: 1908) Vol. 1, p. 465, and Marshman's History of India, Vol. I (Lon; 1867) p. 64-65.

The name of a celebrated Sultan like Kutb-ud-din could not have been unknown to Sultan Firoze, for, in his list, he distinctly speaks of the tomb of *Sultan Kutb-ud-din* which he repaired and renovated along with those of many others whom he names in his "Victories."

(*h*) The author of the Tabakat-i-Nasiri was the contemporary of Kutb-ud-din and Altamash and served the latter in military as well as ecclisiastical services. At the end of the XIXth. tabakat (book) of his work, he writes "And, after this, I come to the section on the Sultans of Hindustan, the first of whom to be mentioned is Sultan Kutb-ud-din Ibak,and his illustrious actions which, please God, will be recorded as fully as the limits of this book will permit."[1]

The next, that is, the XXth Tabakat or book opens with the reign of that Sultan, but nowhere is to be found any mention about the Great Mosque known as the Masjid-i-Kutb-ul-Islam, as the builder of

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(1) Tabakat-i-Nasiri of Maulana Minhaj-i-Saraj, tr; by Major Raverty (Lon: 1881) p. 507.

which Sultan Kutb-ud-din is more generally spoken of, much less about the Kutb Minar with which his name is associated.

While recording the events of the reign of Sultan Shams-ud-din Altamash, the son in-law and successor of Sultan Kutb-ud din, our author does not utter, strange as it seems to be, a word about the well-known minar. Major Raverty, who has translated our author, however, speaks of the minar in one of his many copious foot-notes.

(*i*) Ibn Batuta,[1] the Moorish geographer and traveller, speaks of Delhi as "a most magnificent city" and "the greatest city of Hindustan." There he saw "its mosque" which "is very large." In the court of this mosque he saw "an immense pillar, which they say, is composed of stones from seven different quarries. Its length is thirty cubits; its circumference eight: which is truly miraculous." The translator of our traveller is not sure as to what pillar he saw, for his query in the foot-note is "Is it the pillar of Firozshah?" As to the

1. Dr. Lee, Travels of Ibn Batuta, 1829, p. 111.

mosque which Ibn Batuta saw, there is no doubt that it was the Great Mosque[1] of Kutb-ud-din called the Jama masjid according to the long inscription over the inner archway of the east entrance.

(*j*) Baber in his memoirs[2] speaks of his having circumambulated, amongst other

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1. It is now more commonly known as the *Masjid-i-Kutb-ul-Islam* or the Mosque of the Pole Star of Islāmism, a name which appears to preserve that of its founder. It is also called *Kuwat-ul-islam*, Might of Islam.

The Mosque of Kutb-ud-din was begun immediately after the capture of Delhi in A. H. 587 (A. D. 1191) according to Syad Ahmad and E. Thomas (The Pathan Kings of Delhi, P. 22. Prinsep's Essays, Vol.I.P. 326); and in 589 A.H (A. D. 1193) according to Haft-Iklim, Tabakat-i Akbari, Tazkarat-ul-Muluk, Tarikh-i-Alfi, Zubdat-ut-Tawarikh, Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh, Budauni, Firishtah, Tabakat-i-Nasiri and others referred to by Major Raverty (Tabakat-i-Nasiri, Appendix A). The latter date seems to be the correct date of the capture of Delhi by Sultan Kutb-ud-din. The mosque, the foundation of which was laid in the reign of Sultan Muaz-ud-din Muhammad bin Sam, was completed in A.H. 592 A. D. 1196).

During the reign of Altamash, two wings to the north and south were added to the Mosque and a new cloistered court in the north, south and east was also erected.

At a later date, the court of the mosque was still further enlarged by Alaudin Khilji.

2. Memoirs of Baber by John Leyden and William Erskine .1826) p. 308.

buildings, the tomb of Khwajeh Kutb-ud-din and the Minaret of Sultan Alaudin Khilji. The tomb of Khwajeh Kutb-ud-din is about 11 miles south of Delhi, and just near it is the famous Kutb Minar. The minaret which the Mogul Emperor visited and which seems to have been here noticed by him under the name of Sultan Alaudin is, we think, the famous Kutb Minar.

Cunningham also corroborates us when he says 'The mosque is not mentioned by Baber, although he notices the Minar and the tomb of Khwaja Kutb-ud-din which he perambulated.'[1]

(*k*) In his description of the Subah of Delhi which he calls "one of the greatest cities of antiquity,"[2] the learned Abul Fazl makes no mention of the Kutb Minar or the Kutb Mosque, though he notices the edificies, cities &c. of other kings. The only reference to Kutb-ud-din and Altamash in the above description of Delhi by

1. *Cunningham*, Reports, Vol. I, p. 185.

2. *Jarrett*, Ain-i-Akbari Vol. II, (Cal. 1891) p. 278.

the prime minister of Akbar is when he says that these monarchs "resided in the citadel of Raja *Pithura* (Prithwi)"[1]

The available notices and accounts of this huge minar by the Mohmedan historians collected above give us some food for reflection. Out of a dozen chroniclers that we have quoted, none is found to associate the name of Kutb-ud-din with the minar. Mir Khusru refers to it as "the lofty minar of the Jami Masjid" without saying as to who its builder was and by what name that "lofty minar of the Jami Masjid" was then known to him. Sultan Feroze Shah, who repaired a minar which had been struck by lightning calls it as the minara of Sultan Muizz-ud-din Sam; and this last Sultan, as we know, was the suzerain of Kutb-ud-din Aibak.

Baber speaks, in his memoirs, of his having visited the minaret of Sultan Alaudin Khilji which, to us, seems to be none else than the famous Kutb Minar. So, even as late as the 16th century, the famous column

1. *Jarret*, Ain-i-Akbari, Vol., II, p. 279.

does not seem to have been known to the founder of the mighty Mogul empire by the appellation of the *Kutb Minar.*

Though none of the above Mohmedan writers ascribes the minar to Kutb-ud-din Aibak, to Sultan Shamsh-ud-din Altamash, the son-in-law and successor of Kutb-ud-din Aibak, the minar is ascribed by Shams-i-Siraj-Afif, the author of the 'Tarikh-i-Firoze Shah", who says "So Sultan Shams-ud-din Altamash raised the large pillar in the 'Masjid-i-Jama' at old Delhi, the history of which is well known."[1]

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1 *Elliot*, History of India, III, 353.

CHAPTER V.

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The Inscriptions on the Minar as copied by Ewer.

Inscriptions of Ewer and Thomas—The minar injured by lightning—Repaired by Secunder Lodi and Firoze Shah—Erected by Altamash.

IN the foregoing chapter, we have endeavoured to bring under review the testimony of native chroniclers so far as that was accessible and available through their English translations.

In this chapter and in the one to follow, we propose to read the inscriptions on the Minar in their original state with their translations, and to discuss and ascertain, in a separate chapter, the general meaning of the contents of each that we give.

The ruinous state of the galleries of the Minar renders dangerous the task of deciphering the inscriptions by venturing on them. Mr. Walter Ewer, therefore, availed himself of another recourse. He used " a

telescope of great magnifying power" with the assistance of which he was enabled to copy the inscriptions " with the utmost facility." The results of the telescope have been preserved in a paper by him in the Asiatic Researches[1], to which we are indebted for our copy of the inscriptions.

The other batch of inscriptions, that, forms the subject of our next chapter, is borrowed from Mr. Edward Thomas[2] who had prepared for publication, so long ago as 1885, selected specimens of the monumental inscriptions of the Pathan dynasty. " For the majority of these records," writes Mr. Thomas, " I was originally indebted to Syud Ahmad Khan's excellent Archæological History of Dehli, the 'Asar-us-Sunnadeed,' but the more complicated epigraphs were re-examined and patiently tested, both by that enthusiastic antiquary and myself, under the very shadow of the buildings upon whose walls they are engraved."[3]

1 Asiatic Researches, Vol XIV, (Cal: 1822).

2 *Thomas*, Chronicles of the Pathan Kings of Dehli, (Lon: 1871).

3 Ibid, p. 20.

We give below Ewer's inscriptions with their translations which are also made by him :—

E1*

(Copied from a stone over the entrance door.)

قال النبی صلی الله علیه و سلم من بنا مسجدالله تعالی
یبنی الله له فی الجنت ستا مثله عمارت مینار حضرت
سلطان السلاطین شمس الدنیا و الدین مرحوم مغفور طاب
ثراه وجعل الجنت مثواه شکست شده بود مینار مذکور
درعهد دولت سلطان الاعظم المعظم المکرم شاه سکندربن
شاه بهلول سلطان خلدالله ملکه وسلطانه واعلی امره لولی
خانزاد فتح خان بن مسند عالی اجود جودا احق صحا .
بالملک ودرروز بتدی قریتها بالامر مرمت مرتب کرد ثالثه
عشرمن ماه ربیع الآخر سنه تسعه و تسعمائه

Translation.—The Prophet on whom be the mercy and peace of God, has declared "whoever erects a temple to the true God (on earth,) shall receive six such " dwellings in Paradise." The Minar, the building of the

* The letter E is prefixed to each number of the inscriptions in this Ch. in order to distinguish them from those of Thomas in the next which have been similarly marked with the letter T.

king of kings Shems-ud-Dunya-wa-ud-Din, now in peace and pardon, be his tomb protected, and his place be assigned in heaven—was injured by lightning in the reign of the exalted monarch Secander the son of Behlol: (may his power and empire last for ever and his reign be glorious);and therefore the slave Fatteh-Khan, the son of Mesned-Ali the liberal of the liberal, and meritorious servant of the king ————, repaired it according to command. The 13th of Rebi-ul-Akher in the year 909.

E2

(Copied from the fourth door.)

درین منار در شهور سنه سبعه وسبعمایته بآفت برق
خلل راه یافته بود بتوفیق ربانی برگزیده عنایت سبحانی
فیروزمند یمانی این مقام را با حتیاط تمام عمارت کرد
خالق بیچون این مقام رافع را ازآفات سلامت دارد

Translation.—In the year 907, this Minar having been injured by lightning, by the aid of and favor of God, Firozmend Yamani restored *whatever was needed by the building*; may the Supreme Lord preserve this lofty edifice from future mischance.

E3

(Copied from a slab over the door in the first balcony.)

بفرمان عامر هذه العمارت الملک السلطان شمس الحق

و الدین التمس للواثق المولسی

Translation.—The Sultan Shems-ul-Hak-wa-ud-din Altamash ——— erected this building.

E4

(Copied from the marble portion of the fourth story.)

امر بهذه العمارت فی ایام دولته السلطان الاعظم شاهنشاه

المعظم مالک رقاب الامم مولی ملوک الترک و العرب و العجم

شمس الدنیا والدین والاسلام والمسلمین ذو الامن والامان

وارث ملک سلیمان ابوالمظفر التمس السلطان ناصر امیر المو

منین

Translation. —The erection of this building was commanded in the glorious time of the great Sultan, the mighty king of kings, the master of mankind, the lord of the monarchs of Turkistan, Arabia and Persia ; the Sun of the World and Religion, of the

Faith and the Faithful, the lord of safety and protection, the heir of the kingdom of Suliman Abul Muzeffer Altamash, Nasir-Amin-ul-Momenin.

CHAPTER VI

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The Inscriptions on the Minar as given by E. Thomas.

The minar erected during the reign of Altamash—Its completion also ordered by him—Injured by lightning—Repaired by Sultan Feroze Shah—Names and titles of Mahmud bin Sam and Altamash.

IN this chapter we give a further batch of five epigraphs as given by Mr. Thomas[1] with their translations. The epigraphs have been marked T1, T2 &c. in order to distinguish them from those of Mr. Ewer in the preceding chapter which have been similarly marked E1, E2 &c. For the translations of the inscriptions of Mr. Thomas, I am indebted to my learned friend, Mr. Shaik Faizullabhai Shaik Lukmanji Mulla, B. A., Fellow of the University of Bombay and the Head Master of the Anjuman-i-Islam High School, Bombay. My best thanks are due to him

1 *Thomas*, Chronicles of the Pathan Kings of Dehli.

for kindly helping me to comprehend some of the complicated Arabic phrases in the inscriptions.

T1

(Inscription over the door-way of the fourth story of the Minar.)

امر بهذه العمارت في ايام الدولت السلطان
الاعظم شهنشاه المعظم مالک رقاب الامم مولي
ملوک الترک و العرب و العجم شمس الدنيا و
الدين معز الاسلام و المسلمين ذو الامن
و الامان وارث ملک سليمان ابو المظفر ايلتمش
السلطان ناصر امير المومنين

Translation.—Order was given for erecting this edifice during the days of the reign of the great Sultan, the revered emperor, the master of mankind, the lord of the kings of Turkistan, Arabia and Ajam, the Sun of the World and the Faith, the elevator of the Islam and Moslims, the dispenser of safety and security, the heir of the kingdom of Solomon, Abul Muzaffar Altamash, the Sultan, the helper of the Commander of the Faithful.

T2

(Inscription of Altamash over the doorway of the second story of the Minar).

امر باتمام هذه العمارت الملک المويد من
السما شمس الحق والدين ايلتمش السلطاني
ناصر امير المومنين

Translation.—The completion of this edifice was ordered by the king, helped by the heavenly grace, the Sun of Truth and Religion, Altamash Sultani, the helper (or the subordinate) of the Commander of the Faithful.

T3

(Inscription of Firoze Shah on the fifth story of the minar dated A. H. 770)

در اين منارہ سنہ سبعين و سبعمايت بآفت
برق خلل راہ يافتہ بود بتوفيق رباني بر کشيدہ
عنايت سبحاني فيروز سلطانی اين مقام را باحتياط
تمام عمارت کرد — خالق بيچون اين مقام را از
جميع آفات مصئون داراد

Translation.—The minaret having been damaged by lightning in the year 770, it was with the grace of the Lord along with

divine favour, that Firoze Sultan rebuilt this edifice with perfect care. May the Creator, who has no equal, preserve this edifice protected from all sorts of calamity.

T4

(Inscription of Muhammad bin Sam, on the 4th circlet of the lower story of the Minar.)

السلطان المعظم شهنشاه الاعظم مالک رقاب
الامم مولي ملوک العرب و العجم سلطان السلا
طين في العالم غياث الدنيا و الدين معز الاسلام
و المسلمين محي العدل في العالمين علاء الدو
لت القاهرة فلک الملت الطاهرة جلال الامت
الباهرة شهاب الخلافت باسط الاحسان و الرافت
في الثقلين ظل الله في الخافقين العامى لبلاد
الله الراعي لعباد الله محرز ممالک الدنيا و
مظهر كلمت الله العليا ابو المظفر محمد بن سام
قسيم امير المومنين خلد الله ملكه

Translation.—The very revered Sultan, the great Emperor, the master of mankind, the Suzerain of the King of Arabia and Ajam, the King of Kings in the world, the asylum of (the prophet of) the world and religion, the exalter of the glory of Islam

and Moslems, the enlivener of justice in the world, the glory of the mighty kingdom, the heaven of the sacred religion, the splendour of the Supreme nation, the star of the Khilafat, the widener of the scope of beneficence and kindness among the two superior creations, (men and demons ; the shadow of God in the east and the west, the protector of the countries of God, the guardian of the slaves of God, the subduer of the Kingdoms of the world, the elevator of the high word of God, Abul Muzaffar Mohmad, son of Sam, the co-partner of the Amir-ul-Mumanain (the ruler of the faithful), may God make his reign eternal.

T5

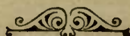
(Inscription of Altamash on the upper circlet of the second story of the Minar).

السلطان الاعظم شہنشاہ المعظم مالک رقاب
الامم مفخر ملوک العرب و العجم ظل الله في
العالم شمس الدين غياث الاسلام و المسلمين
تاج الملوک والسلاطين باسط العدل في العالمين
علا الدولت القاہرة جلال الملت الباہرة المويد
من السما المظفر على الاعدا شہاب سما الخلافت
ناشر العدل و الرافت معز ممالک الدنيا و مظہر

كلمة الله العليا ابو المظفر ايلتمس السلطاني ناصر
امير المومنين خلد الله ملكه وسلطانه و اعلى
امره وشانه

Translation.—The very revered Sultan, the great Emperor, the master of mankind, the first of the Kings of Arabia and Ajam, the shadow of God on Earth, the Sun of the World and the Faith, the refuge of Islam and Moslims, the Crown of the Kings and Sultans, the extender of the scope of equity in the world, the glory of the mighty Kingdom, the splendour of the Supreme nation, helped with the heavenly grace, giver of victory over the enemies, the shining star of the heaven of khilafat, the diffuser of justice and kindness, the conqueror of the Kingdoms of the world, the divulger of the high word of God Abul-Muzaffar, Altamash Al Sultan, helper of the Commander of the Faithful ; may God make his reign and rule eternal and give supremacy to his government.

CHAPTER VII.



Further Inquiry into the Authorship of the Kutb Minar from its Inscriptions.

' Minar of Shams-ud-din'-Ewer's incorrect date—Significance of E4 and T1-Minar built during Altamash's reign-Epigraphs on the Kutb Mosque-Kutb not averse to glorify his name-Numismatic evidence Absence of Kutb's coins due to his drained treasury-Presence of Kutb's name on an epigraph -its value.

WE now arrive at that phase of our inquiry which is as interesting as it is important.

The ancient monuments of any country form, in the absence of its written annals, the reliable sources of information as to the early condition of that country. And this can be truly said of India where it is monuments that unfold facts in the almost total absence of its written history.

The monuments of a country do not come into being without a specific object or motive underlying them. They have some purpose to serve and it is this purpose which, when rightly interpreted and explained, goes to form its history, when written records are wanting or are inaccessible. The history of that magnificent column at Delhi is enveloped in darkness. We know of no official documents or *firmans* to exist of the period sanctioning the erection of the mighty structure or its expenditure. Its story is, therefore, traditional rather than historical and what light is thrown on its history is thrown by the notices and accounts of the Moslem historians and travellers and by the inscriptions on the Minar itself. In a previous chapter we examined the testimony of the Mohmedan historians and it is the object of this chapter to endeavour to read the history of the Kutb Minar in the epigraphs engraved on it.

Inscription E1 avers that the Minar is the building of Sultan Shams-ud-din Altamash and that it was repaired by

Secunder, Son of Behlol, in A. H. 909 (A. D. 1503) in whose reign it was injured by lightning.

E1 is significant in that it ascribes the proprietorship of the Minar to Sultan Altamash. The Minar was repaired by "the slave Fatteh-Khan, the son of Mesned Ali, the liberal of the liberal, and the meritorious servant of the king" Sultan Secunder Shah Lodi " according to command." This epigraph bears the date "The 13th of Rebi-ul-Akher in the year 909" (1503 A. D.).

There can be no room for doubt as to this inscription having been engraved after the restoration of that portion of the Minar which was injured by lightning " in the reign of the exalted monarch Secunder the son of Behlol." The date of the engraving of the inscription is, as we have seen, 1503 A. D. and even at so late a date as that, this Minar seems to have been known to Sultan Secunder Lodi as مینار حضرت سلطان السلاطین شمس الدنیا و الدین the *Minar of the king of kings Shams-ud-din.* If the minar was built by Sultan

Kutb-ud-din Aibak and also named after him how do we account for the Minar of the king of kings Shams-ud-din as known to the people of Delhi in 1503 A. D. ?

The inscription marked E2 corresponds to that marked T3. E2 speaks of the Minar as having been injured and therefore repaired by Firozemend Yamani in the year 907 as translated by Ewer. But this seems to be a mistake[1] The correct date is A. H. 770 (A. D. 1368) when Sultan Firoze re-

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1.—We shall endeavour to see what the mistake is and how it could have probably arisen.

The corresponding Christian year to the Hijra year 907 would be 1501 A. D. In E1, we read that it was in 909 A.H. (1503 A. D.) that the Minar was repaired by Sultan Secunder Lodi. Now, if the year 907 is correct (which it is not) that would mean that the minar was also damaged two years prior to the restoration by Sultan Secunder Lodi in 909 A. H. (1503 A. D.). But that, as a matter of fact, is not so. The year in the inscription E2 as copied by Ewer is سنہ سبعہ و سبعمایۃ. The same as that given by Thomas in the inscription T5 is سنہ سبعین و سبعمایہ. Ewer translates سنہ سبعہ و سبعمایہ as the year 907 which is a mistake since سبعہ means 7 and not 9, the Arabic word for the latter being تسع (Persian نُہ). The correct rendering of Ewer's سنہ سبعہ و سبعمایہ would, therefore, be 707, but

paired the Minar as can also be seen from the inscription T3.

E3 ascribes the erection of the minar to Sultan Altamash. But E4 and T1 which correspond to each other are very important for our purpose. Let the reader read

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not 907 *under any circumstance.* But Ewer's سنہ سبعہ و سبعمایہ the year 707 does not accord with Thomas' سنہ سبعین و سبعمایہ the year 770, which latter date is the correct date of the restoration of the Minar by Sultan Firoze Shah. سبعہ is 7, سبعین is 70, مایہ is 100, and سبعمایة or سبعمایہ is 700.

We believe the inscription on the Minar has سبعین (70) and not سبعہ (7) as the inscription (No. III) printed on p. 488 of the Asiatic Researches, vol. XIV, shows. Mr. Ewer's telescopic copy of the inscription must therefore also contain سبعین (70) but the error seems to have its origin probably in the paper which Mr. Ewer prepared for publication in the Asiatic Researches. He might have probably written سبعہ in his manuscripts. Mr. Ewer does not mention a word about the restoraton of the Minar in 1368 A. D. by Sultan Firoze Shah anywhere in his paper. This is probably due to the error in the inscription itself marked No. III by him and his own incorrect translation of the date. Sultan Firoze Shah certainly flourished before A. H. 907. This Mr Ewer, perhaps, knew too well and notwithstanding the suggestion of the name, Firozemend Yamani, in the inscription, he could not venture to ascribe to Sultan Firoze Shah a reparation which his own translation showed to have been conducted about 137 years *after* that Sultan.

both the original extracts and their translations very carefully. When he peruses E4 and T1, in the light of E1, E3 and T2, what information does he glean from them? Two facts will seem to him to be established.

a.—Altamash was the builder of the Minar.

b.—Order was given for erecting this minar *during the reign of the great Sultan Altamash*.

The epigraphs E4 and T1 are of the paramount importance as they conclusively prove that the minar was erected during the reign of no other Sultan than Altamash. When this edifice saw the light of day *during the reign of Altamash*, Sultan Kutb-ud-din *was not living.* Kutb died in 607 A. H. (1210 A. D.) by a fall from his horse while playing *Chau gan,* or polo. His son, Aram, succeeded him. But after a reign of barely one year, he was defeated and deposed by Altamash, who was at that time Governor of Budaon. Thus, a period of about a year intervenes between the

death of Sultan Kutb and the accession of Altamash to the throne. How then, could Kutb have built the Minar which, according to the above inscriptions, was erected *during the reign of Altamash* ? What can possibly be more definite and distinct than these epigraphs ?

But we shall bring under review further epigraphic and numismatic evidence to show that Sultan Kutb-ud-din had, perhaps, nothing to do with the Minar which has been erroneously supposed to have been built by him and named after him.

We have seen that the Great Mosque of Kutb-ul-Islam was built by Sultan Kutb-ud-din. This can be shown from the following inscriptions on the mosque from which we learn that it was built by Sultan Kutb of the materials from 27 idol temples :—

این مسجدرا تیار کرد قطب الدین ایبک خدا
اورا رحمت کناد –

Translation.—Kutb-ud-din Aibak, on whom be the mercy of God, constructed this mosque.

1. Asiatic Researches, XIV, 489.

[The second line of the Inscription under the arch of the eastern entrance to the Kutb mosque, at Delhi, dated A. H. 587 (1191 A. D.)]

این حصاررا فتح کرد واین مسجد جامع را
بر ساخت بتاریخ في شهور سنه سبع وثمانين و
خمسمايت امير اسفهسالار اجل كبير قطب الدوله
و الدين اميرالامرا اي بك سلطاني اعزالله
انصاره و بيست وهفت آلت بتخانه كي [sic]
در هر بتخانه دوبار هزار بار هزار دليوال صرف
شده بود دراين مسجد بكار بسته شده است
خداي عزو جل بران بنده رحمت كناد هر كه بر
نيت باني خيرد عا ايما ن گويد

Translation.—This fortress was conquered and this Masjid Jami was built during the months of the year 587 by the great and mighty commander-in-chief Kutb-ul-Dawlat-wa-ul-Din, (the pivot of the kingdom and the faith), the commander of commanders, Aibeg Sultan. May God exalt his helpers.

Materials from 27 idol temples, each of which cost twice thousand into thousand Diliwals, have been used in this Masjid. May Almighty God send mercy on him, who prays for the rest of the builder.

1. *Thomas*, Pathan Kings, pp. 22-23.

The name of Sultan Kutb-ud-din Aibak has been emblazoned on this Great Mosque. Why should Kutb not have also inscribed his name as the builder of the *Kutb Minar* on the Minar itself if he had erected it, just as he had done on the masjid whose builder he certainly was ? Supposing, however, that it was Kutb-ud-din Aibak who raised the Minar, what should have at all precluded that sovereign from handing down to posterity his own name as the author of so huge an edifice, the like of which, so far as the height is concerned, the world[1] has never seen ?

Was it, then, his innate modesty that did not induce him to engrave an epigraph purporting to say that the *minara* was the direct outcome of his own inception? That he was certainly not averse to glorify his name is obvious from the two inscriptions on the Jama Masjid given above.

The raising of such a gigantic structure as the Kutb Minar could not have been possible without a great expenditure in

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1 *Elphinstone,* History of India, 1905, p. 367.

view of the fact that it was not built, like the Kutb Mosque, out of the materials of the Hindu temples.[1] Was the royal treasury at the time in a position to bear the burden of such mighty expenditure ? We shall quote Thomas :—

" When he (Kutb-ud-din) himself at last ascended the throne at Lahor, his circumstances do not seem to have been very prosperous; all the available wealth of India had already been concentrated at Ghazni, and he himself was possessed of an exaggerated propensity to Eastern munificence .... which was anything but calculated to leave him an overflowing treasury."[2] Again, "Kutb-ud-din, as has been noticed, was celebrated for his liberality and profusion, and, doubtless, much of the wealth of India had recently gone to enrich the foreign invaders, of every class, quite apart from what eventually found its way into the Imperial treasury. "[3]

Kutb-ud-din did not strike coins bearing his own superscription when he attained

1 *Cunningham*, Archæological Survey of India, I., 190.

2 *Thomas*, Pathan Kings of Dehli, 1871, pp. 34-36.

3 Ibid, p. 37.

the honours of kingship, though, while acting as Viceroy for Shihab-ud-din Mahmud Ghori, he had issued money of his government in the name of his kind and benevolent master. Kutb, however, contented himself with this currency of his previous coins. The absence of coins bearing his own name and title is, then, responsible to the state of his drained treasury.[1] It is inconceivable, therefore, as to how Kutb-ud-diu could have thought of erecting such a huge tower, when the Imperial treasury, which was at the time of his accession to the throne in a drained condition, could not permit him to strike coins bearing his own superscription. On the other hand, we have ample testimony to show that Sultan Altamash issued coins in his own name.[2]

We have seen above that none of the inscriptions ascribes the Minar to Sultan Kutb-ud-din. Yet it is argued that on the defaced lowermost band of the Minar, immediately over the foundation course, Kutb's recognised titles of الاسفهسالار الاجل الكبير[3] are

1 *Thomas*, Pathan Kings, p. 35-37.

2 Ibid, pp. 41-80

3 *Sir Syud Ahmad*, آثار الصناديد p. 13 and *Thomas*, Pathan Kings, p. 24.

legible. But "the lowermost belt has been too much injured, both by time and by ignorant restorations, to admit of being read, but Syad Ahmad has traced the words '*Amir-ul-Umra*,' or Chief of the nobles."[1]

The occurrence of the name of Kutb-ud-din on one of the belts of inscriptions on the Minar seems to have been made too much of. Mr. Thomas[2] goes to the extent to regard it as "a further record of his (Kutb ud-din's) active participation" in the erection of the building. Why, on the basement storey of the Minar is recorded the name of Fazzil, son of Abul Muali, the *Mutawali* or high priest. Again, on the wall of the fourth storey, also, there is a short Nagari inscription in one line with the name of Sultan Muhammad Taghlak and the date of *Samvat* 1382 or A. D. 1325 which date was the first year of that Sultan's reign. Thus the names of Fazzil and Sultan Muhammad Taghlak also occur on

1 *Cunningham*, Reports, Vol I, p 200

2 *Thomas*, Pathan Kings, p 24.

the minar just as that of Kutb-ud-din, according to Sayyid Ahmad, occurs. Will Mr. Thomas, then, by parity of reasoning, permit us to submit to the world at large this occurrence of the names as "a record of the active participation" on the part of Fazzil, the Mutawali or high-priest, and Sultan Muhammad Taghlak in the erection of this building? We find many travellers and visitors to the antiquities of Hindustan superscribing their names or initials thereon. Can all such be said to have some hand in their erection? The writer of this book himself remembers his having inscribed his initials upon one of the ancient caves of Hindustan. Will Mr. Thomas have the good grace to hold him up as one having at least "active participation" in the construction of that cave, if not as its actual author?

The occurrence of Kutb ud-din's name on the Minar can be accounted for by a better reasoning than the one which Mr. Thomas has propounded in his work. The very inception of Altamash's career from his purchase as a slave was solely indebted to

Kutb-ud-din. His marriage with the latter's daughter and his promotion to high rank and authority and many other favours which he ultimately received at Kutb's hands were events which a grateful heart is not capable of soon forgetting. So, it is this deep sense of gratitude and gratefulness which, we think, led Sultan Altamash to inscribe on the minar the name of his master and father-in-law—the name that should have been so dear to him.

T4 and T5 do not call for any particular remarks as they contain only names and titles of two Sultans—T4 those of Sultan Mahmud Ghori and T5 those of Sultan Shams-ud-din Alta-mash.

We should pause here to recapitulate what we have said above. We have fully discussed all the pros and cons of this interesting inquiry bringing under review the inscriptions of Ewer and Thomas with their translations. We have endeavoured to ascertain the general import of the con tents of these inscriptions and to trace there from the history of the magnificent Kutb

Minar dispassionately and with an unbiassed mind. And it seems but natural to gather from our present investigation·

(*a*) That the Kutb Minar was the building of Sultan Shams-ud-din Altamash (E1).

(*b*) That it was built by Altamash (E3, E4 and T1) and that its completion was ordered by Altamash (T2).

(*c*) That it was erected ***during the reign of*** Altamash (E4 and T1).

(*d*) That it was injured by lightning in A. H. 770 during the reign of Sultan Firoze Shah and that he repaired it (E2 and T3).

(*e*) That it was also struck by lightning during the reign of Sultan Secunder Shah Lodi by whose order it was repaired by Fatteh Khan, the son of Mesned Ali, in A. H. 909—A. D. 1503 (E1)

(*f*) That the edifice which was built by Sultan Kutb-ud-din contains epigraphs to that effect ; as for example, his mosque. The Kutb Minar has no such single inscription to show that it was built by him.

(*g*) That the numismatic evidence discloses the state of the Imperial treasury of Sultan Kutb-ud-din which did not permit him to strike coins bearing his own superscription—much less to erect such a huge edifice as the Kutb Minar.

(*h*) That the occurrence of the name of Sultan Kutb-ud-din on one of the inscriptions on the Minar is not a proof of his "active participation" in its erection. Gratitude and gratefulness impelled Altamash to engrave Kutb-ud-din's name.

CHAPTER VIII

The Kutb Minar—An Inquiry into its Appellation.

The Kutb Minar not a misnomer-Life of Sultan Kutb-of Saint Kutb-Predilection of Altamash for this saint testified to by Tabakat-i-Nasiri-Minar named after Saint Kutb-Evidence of Raverty, Duff and Cunningham-But absence of epigraphic evidence-How to be accounted for?—A plea for the Saint's celebrity.

AFTER having attempted to show, from the testimony of the Mahomedan historians and from the epigraphs on the Minar itself, that the Minar is not attributed to Sultan Kutb-ud-din, we are naturally confronted with the question as to why, then, the Minar is known to us by its present popular appellation of the *Kutb Minar*? It is the purpose of this chapter to enter into the investigation of this question—an investigation which should

conclusively prove that the *Kutb Minar*, though not built by Sultan Kutb-ud-din, is but rightly known as such and that any name other than the *Kutb Minar* would certainly be a misnomer.

But to an intelligent reader it should have been made apparent from the testimony of Moslem writers and of the inscriptions that the famous *Kutb Minar* does not seem to have been known as such a few centuries back.

How is it that Sultan Kutb is not held up by the historians, whom we have quoted in Chapter IV, and by the epigraphs on the the Minar, as the prince who erected it, in conformity with the suggestion which the title of this great monument would naturally raise ?

Sultan Kutb-ud-din was certainly not a weak and indolent ruler and therefore was very popular with his subjects. During the period that he served Sulan Mohammud Ghori as his viceroy and during his regime of no less than four years as the first of the line of the Mohmedan Emperors that

reigned at Delhi, he gained, according to the unanimous verdict of many of the best historians, the undisputed reputation of being a virtuous and just ruler.

"Cuttub was of a brave and virtuous disposition, open and liberal to his friends, and courteous and affable to strangers. In the art of war and government he was inferior to none nor was he a mean proficient in literature."[1]..
He was certainly an accomplished warrior and had nearly equalled the greatest heroes in fame, had not his loss of the kingdom of Ghizni tarnished his glory............When a man is praised for generosity in India, they say to this day, 'He is as generous as Cuttub-ud-din.'"[2]

Further, we have the authority of Firistah and Tabakat-i-Nasiri to say that it was his munificence and generosity that earned for him the titles of "Lak Baksh"[3] [giver

1. *Dow*, History of Hindostan, Vol I (1803) p. 170

2. Ibid. p. 179.

3. بخشش او بهمه لک لک و کشتن او بهمه لک لک

(Tabakat-i-Nasiri, Calcutta text, pp-138, 149, 166.)

of laks (of rupees)] and " a second Hatim Tai."[1]

Throughout the period of three centuries dating from 990 A. D. to 1290 A. D. only four Sultans, according to Mr. J. Talboys Wheeler, "are deserving of remembrance."[2] From his list, he does not omit the name of Sultan Kutb-ud-din thus testifying to the greatness, worth and ability of that king.

Kutb-ud-din was, then, a Sultan of no mean order. So, when we do not find the Moslem chroniclers, some of whom are his contemporaries, and the epigraphs on the Minar associating his name with a magnificent edifice of their times, we are induced to arrive at the two following conclusions :—

(*a*) Either Kutb-ud-din was not such a great, able and popular Sultan and his exploits as the Viceroy of Mohmad Ghori in India for twenty years and as the paramount Sultan for four years were not such as to attract the notice of the Moslem chroniclers ;

1. Vide also *Edward Thomas*, The Chronicles of the Pathan Kings of Dehli, (Lon: 1871) pp, 35-36.

2. *Wheeler*, History of India under Mussulman Rule, Pt. I (Lon: 1876), p 49, foot-note.

Or

(*b*) If Kutb-ud-din was a really good and great Sultan, he was not probably the builder of the Minar, or, he was not known as such to the chroniclers of his time and to later generation so far back as the beginning of the 16th century when, to Sultan Secunder Lodi, the column was known as the *Minara of Shams-ud-din*.

The first conclusion, (*a*), may be safely dismissed without any further argument as there can be no doubt about his being a good and great Sultan, as we have seen above. So, the other remains, viz., that Kutb was probably not the author of the Minar, or, that, at least to the contemporary Moslem writers and to later scribes, he might not have been known as such. And it is in the light of this conclusion that we can account for the omission on the part of the above writers to ascribe to Sultan Kutb the authorship of so important a structure.

If the Kutb Minar was not built by Sultan Kutb-ud-din, and if it was not known as such to the Moslem world down to the

time of Sultan Secunder Lodi how, then, shall we account for the fact that many modern works on Indian History are found to style this tallest tower in the world *the Kutb Minar* and associate it with the name of *Sultan Kutb-ud-din Aibak*, the first Turk Sultan of Delhi ?

It is supposed by European writers and archæologists to have been not only named after Sultan Kutb-ud-din but to have been also founded by him. This is apparently an error arising probably from some incorrect translation of Persian works. Besides, the word *Kutb* was quite sufficient proof in their imagination to mislead them in ascribing the minar to Sultan Kutb without ascertaining as to whether *their* '*Kutb*' was *Sultan* Kutb or a wholly different Kutb.

The close of the 12th and the dawn of the 13th century saw two Kutb-ud-dins—one a king, the other a saint. The first impressed the Mohmedan world by his prowess, exploits, justice and munificence as a warrior, a statesman and a ruler. The other was famous as the " principal pole of the globe

of sanctity, and sun of the sphere of guidance, that exhibiter of divine illumination and fountain of illustrious miracles."[1] The one was a materialist, the other an occultist.

We are aware of the doings of the former as a viceroy and, subsequently, as a ruler. We shall here briefly sketch the life of the latter—the saint.

Khwaja Kutb-ud-din Bakhtyar Kaki of Ush in Transoxiana was the famous Mohmedan Saint of India who "edified the world by his outward demeanour and the sanctity of his interior life."[2] His father, Kamal-ud-din Musa, died when he was 1 year and 6 months old. He received his doctrine and became a *vicegerent* at the age of eighteen. He profited by the instruction of many saints at Baghdad and other places. From the fact of the Afghans claiming him as their titular saint by the title of "the Afghan Kutb or Pole," it may be inferred that he probably resided for a time in the Afghan country. In search of a holy *Guru*

1. *Dorn's* translation of Neamet Ullah's History of the Afghans, (Lon 1836) Part II, Book III, p 2.

2. *Jarret*, Ain-i-Akbari, Vol II (Cal: 1891) p. 303

he came out to Multan in the time of Nasir-ud-din Kubachah and for a time attended Shaikh Baha-ud-din Zakariya, another celebrated saint. He subsequently went to Delhi in the reign of Sultan Shams-ud-din Altamash who, owing to the high sanctity and veneration of this saint, himself came forth[1] from the city to receive him and do him reverence. The Khwaja took up his residence at Gilu Khari on account of the scarcity of water in the city. When Shaikh Jalal-ud-din Tabrizi, who was the *Shaikh-ul-Islam*, died, Altamash offered him that post which he declined. His mother, too, was a woman of great and austere virtue and his future sanctity was predicted by the prophet Khizr by whose personal apparition he was twice honoured. It is related that Khwaja Kutb-ud-din and Saikh Sufi Badhni, with a number of other saints, were taken prisoners by the Moguls. The captives suffered hunger and thirst. Kutb-ud-din " drew forth from his wallet warm cakes (*kak*), with which he supplied each

1. *Raverty*, Tabakat-i-Nasiri of Maulana Minhaj-i-Siraj, (Lon: 1881) p 621-22 f. n.

one of the party, while the Sufi gave them all to drink from his broken water vessel (*Badhni*). From this circumstance, the Khwajah was called *Kaki*, and the other *Badhni*."[1] From Abul Fazl's chapter on Awliya-i-Hind (Saints of India) it appears that Khwaja Kutb-ud-din Ushi not only had intercourse with many eminent saints of his day but that Shaikh Badr-ud-din and Shaikh Sharaf-ud-din of Panipat were his disciples who received instructions under him at Delhi. He was of great service to the people in general by whom he was held in high esteem and veneration. Ush was his place of birth and he died on the 24th of the month of Rabi-ul-awwal, A. H. 633 (7th December 1235 A. D.) at Delhi where lies his tomb which is visited in large numbers by his co-religionists.[2]

We have it, then, on the authority of Major Raverty that when this Khwaja went to Delhi, Shams-ud-din Altamash

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1. *Jarret*, Ain-i-Akbari, III, (Cal, 1894) p. 366.

2. A sketch of the life of Khwaja Kutb-ud-din Ushi will also be found in Neamet Ullah's History of the Afghans, tr: by Dorn, Part II, Book III, (Lon 1836) p 2.

himself came forth to receive him. This predilection of Altamash is testified to by Maulana Minhaj-i-Siraj, the author of the *Tabakat-i-Nasiri*, from whom we learn as to how he was impressed in his boyhood to 'regard devotees and ascetics with reverence and watch over their weal.' We quote him:—

One of the trustworthy has related, saying : " I heard from the blessed lips of that monarch (Altamash) himself, who said, "on a certain occasion, one of the (above-mentioned) family gave me a small piece of money, saying : ' Go into the market and buy some grapes and bring them.' When I set out for the market, I lost by the way that bit of money ; and through my youthful age, out of fear at what had happened I fell a crying. Whilst thus lamenting, I was joined by a good Darwesh who took me by the hand and purchased for me grapes which he gave me ; and he made me promise (saying) : ' When thou attainest unto power and dominion thou wilt ever regard devotees and ascetics with reverence, and watch over their weal. I gave him my promiee ; and all the prosperity

and blessings which I acquired I acquired through the compassionate regard of that Darwesh.' "[1]

The early anecdote of Altamash mentioned in the Tabakat-i-Nasiri as well as the respect and regard which he subsequently showed towards the Khwaja Kutb-ud-din Kaki when he came out to India are significant in themselves as proving the high esteem and reverence in which that saint was held by the king himself. The Sultan's fancy of the saints in general and of Kutb-ud-din in particular tends, to a great degree, in explaining away the conclusion which we have arrived at from the works of the Mohmedan historians, especially of Shams-i-Siraj Afif, and from the inscriptions that the minar was raised by Sultan Shams-ud-din-Altamash. We venture to believe that there seems to be no reason to doubt Shams-i-Siraj Afif's statement corroborated as it is by the passage in the Tabakat-i-Nasiri, quoted above.

The writer of the 'Literary Intelligence'

1. Major Raverty, Tabakat-i-Nasiri, (Lon : 1881) p. 560

in the Journal[1] of the Asiatic Society of Bengal also says :—

"The Qotb Minar has not its name from Qotb (Aldyn) Aybak as Ritter supposes, but from the Saint Qotb Aldyn Baktyar Kaky who is buried not far from it."

This statement is further corroborated by Major Raverty[2] who says, "The minarah is styled the Lath of *Kutb Sahib* after a celebrated Muhammadan Saint, Khwajah Kutb-ud-din Bakhtyar Kaki."

Miss Mabel Duff (afterwards Mrs. W. R. Rickmers), too, supports Raverty on whose authority she writes that the Kutb Minar was erected to the memory of the *Saint Kutb*.

Sir Alexander Cunningham[4], the Director General of the Archæological Survey of

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1 Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Vol XX, Nos. I to VII, 1851, p. 353.

2 *Raverty's* Translation of the Tabakat-i-Nasiri, pp. 621-22 foot-note.

3 *Duff*, Chronology of India from the earliest times to the beginning of the 16th century, (Lon. 1899), p. 184.

4 *Cunningham*, Archæological Survey of India, Four Reports made during the years 1862-63-64-65, Vol I, (Simla, 1871), p. 184.

India, who was specially appointed by the Government of Lord Canning in 1862 to survey the antiquities of India, states, in his report on Delhi, "It seems probable, however, that the Kutb Mosque, as well as the *Minar*, may have been named after the contemporary Saint Kutb-ud-din Ushi, whose tomb is close by."

But nowhere in his Reports does he definitely ascribe the Minar to Sultan Kutb-ud-din. He thinks "the building of the Minar may have been begun by Aibeg in A.D. 1200 and completed by Altamash in about 1220."[1] If there was any one more fitted and capable, partly by virtue of his official duties and the facilities that they afforded, and partly by his erudition and his scholarship to investigate further into the matter, it was Sir Alexander Cunningham. Instead of deeply going into the matter to see on which side truth lies the question is left unascertained while he himself refrains from giving any definite opinion.

Now it might be argued that if it was Altamash who raised the Minar and named

1 *Cunningham*, Reports, p. 202.

it after his contemporary Mohmedan saint Kutb-ud-din Bakhtiar Kaki, how is it that there is not to be found engraved even a line of inscription to that effect? This would, no doubt, be a strong argument and would confound the advocates of the Altamash-theory. It is strange why that Sultan did not inscribe a single line to say that he raised the building in honour of the celebrated saint especially when he has engraved his own name and honorific titles and when the name of Sultan Kutb-ud-din is also found inscribed thereon. This argument can be met with from the point of view of the popularity of this saint. As we have observed from the biographical sketch of his life, this celebrated saint, who had been of great service to the people, was held in high esteem and reverence by the ruler and the ruled alike. Perhaps his popularity, therefore, was such as not to have warranted the necessity of any epigraph to say that the structure was meant to honour him. His name was probably on every lip. Everyone knew wherefore and in whose honour the edifice was being erected. Sultan Altamash, therefore, saw no

necessity for an inscription. The name *Kutb* came to be associated with the *Minar*, and it was handed down to posterity from one generation to another, and even to this day the minar is known to us by its popular appellation of the *Kutb Minar*. Look at it, if you like, as the edifice built by *Sultan Kutb* in commemoration of the establishment of the Mohmedan Empire in Hindustan, it is the *Kutb Minar*, or, view it, if you will, as the tower of *Sultan Altamash* built *during his reign* and named after *Saint Kutb* it is still the self-same *Kutb Minar*. So, as we have remarked at the very outset of this chapter, any other name than the *Kutb Minar*, given to this magnificent monument, would assuredly be a misnomer.

CHAPTER IX

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An Investigation into the Motives that led to the Erection of the Minar.

Three motives of its erection-1. *Jaya stambha* or a column of victory-Kutb Mosque a probable monument of victory-2. *Mazinah*-Arguments against it and in its favour examined-3. *In memory of Kutb*-Killing two birds at one stroke-It preserved the memory of two *Kutbs*-And served as a *Mazinah.*

WE have said above that a monument has some purpose to serve· That the Kutb Minar had some purpose there can be no doubt ; and what that some purpose or purposes were this chapter proposes to investigate into.

The probable motives that led to the erection of this magnificient minar may have been :—

(a) to show it off as a *Jaya Stambha*, or a Pillar of Victory;

(b) to use it as a *Mazinah* to the Kutb Mosque, and

(c) to use it in memory of Kutb.

A—*Jaya Stambha* or Pillar of Victory.

In order to discuss the probability of the Minar being erected as a column of victory, it is necessary to bring under review the events and condition of India that should have necessitated the erection of such a *Jaya Stambha* or a Pillar of Victory.

Shihab-ud-din, on the death of his brother, Ghiyas-ud-din Ghori, came to the throne as Sultan Mohammed Ghori in 1186 A. D. At this time, the Hindu kingdoms of India were in a state of mutual quarrels and dissensions. Shortly before the time of Shihab-ud-din, the four greatest kingdoms of India were Delhi, Ajmere, Canouj and Gujrat. Delhi was held by the Tunara clan, Ajmere by the Chauhan clan under Prithvi Raj, Canouj by the Rathors, and Gujrat by the Baghilas. The Tunara chief of Delhi, having died without any male issue, had adopted

his grandson Prithvi Raj of Ajmere thus uniting the Tunaras of Delhi and the Chauhans of Ajmere under one head. But this arrangement was not approved of by Jaichand, the Raja of Canouj, who was also a grandson of the Tunara chief through another daughter. He was mortally offended at the preference shown to his cousin. A rivalship thus arose between the Rathors of Canouj on the one hand and the Tonaras of Delhi and the Chauhans of Ajmere united under Prithvi Raj on the other. This led to wars and jealousies which contributed, in no small measure, to the success in India of Shihab-ud-din, renowned as Muhammad Ghori, who, as the historians tell us, was even more sanguinary than Sultan Mohammad of Ghazni. So, when Shihab-ud-din first attacked Prithvi Raj in 1189 and then again in 1193, Jaichand of Canouj, instead of making common cause with his cousin, Prithvi Raj, held aloof. The result of these jealousies and dissensions was, that both the Hindu Rajas were ultimately utterly overthrown and Hindustan, from the

Indus to the Bay of Bengal, was conquered by the Mohmedans. It is not necessary to enter into the details and descriptions of the battles that took place between the Hindu Rajas of India and their Mohmedan invader. Suffice it to say that Shihab-ud din, after defeating Prithvi Raj, returned to Ghazni, leaving his slave Kutb-ud-din Aibak as his representative in India, who followed up the successes of his master by taking possession of *Delhi* and Coel This incidence of the capture of Delhi by Kutb-ud-din in his capacity as Viceroy of Shihab-ud-din is very significant in that the city of Delhi passed, for the first time, into the hands of the Musalmans, after having remained in the occupation of the Hindus nearly upto the 12th century. Hasan Nizami[1], the author of the celebrated *Taj-ul-Maasir*, says, that Delhi " is among the chief (mother) cities of Hind."

Than this event of the capture of *Hindu* Delhi by Kutb-ud-din Aibak for *the first time* in 1193 A. D., none could

1 *Elliot*, History of India, Vol II, p. 216.

have been more significant to necessitate the erection of a monument to mark it. Could we have been able to show from the testimony of the Mohmedan historians and from the story told by the epigraphs on the Kutb Minar, that Sultan Kutb-ud-din *was* the builder of that edifice, we would have no hesitation in regarding this important event in the History of India as a more probable motive to have actuated Kutb-ud-din, the *first Mohmedan Sultan of Delhi*, to commemorate his great exploit by raising so huge and magnificent a minar. But the fact is otherwise, as amply shown in the foregoing chapters. We cannot, therefore, credit the statement of modern writers[1] that *Kutb-ud-din* erected the *Minar* to celebrate his conquest of the Hindus. If ever any edifice in com-

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1 *James Fergusson*, Hand-book of Architecture, Vol. I. (Lon: 1855), p. 416.

Henry Beveridge, Comprehensive History of India, Vol. I. (1866), p. 63 fn.

Rev. G. Trevor, India, an Historical sketch, (Lon: 1858), p, 80.

Sir W. W. Hunter, The Imperial Gazetteer of India, Vol IV., 1855, p. 191.

memoration of his conquest of the Hindus could possibly be ascribed, with some justification, to Sultan Kutb-ud-din, it is the Kutb Mosque which, according to Sir W. W. Hunter "was commenced, according to the inscription on its entrance archway, *immediately after* the capture of the city of (Delhi) in 1193."

This mosque, we know, was built of the materials from 27 idol temples. According to Ibn Batuta[1] there was a boud-khana, that is to say, a temple of idols which, after the conquest of Delhi, was converted into a mosque.

We have the statement of Mr. W. Crooke[2] that it was "the custom of the early Musalman conquerors to utilize the edifices of the conquered religion." In view of this custom and the evidence of Ibn Batuta, then, it might seem probable that

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1 " L'emplacement de cette mosquée était un boudkhânah, C'està dire un temple d' idoles ; mais, après la conquête de Dihly, il fut convertie en mosquée.'—Paris edition. III, 152 quoted by Thomas in his *Pathan Kings*, 17'.

2 *W. Crooke*, The North-Western Provinces of India —Their History. Ethnology and Administration, (Lon : 1897), p. 84

Sultan Kutb might have built this *Mosque, but not the Minar*, as a monument of the supremacy of the Islam faith over the religion of the conquered Hindus, though we admit we have no authority to say that it was expressly erected by Kutb *to commemorate his conquest of the Hindus* in 1193 A. D.

B—*Mazinah* or Muezzin's tower.

Sir Sayyad Ahmad does not appear to regard the Kutb Minar as a *Mazinah*, for he argues that if it was at all meant as a *Mazinah*, it would have been erected at one end of the Mosque and not at some distance from it. In reply to this argument, Cunningham[1] points to the Koel Minar built in 1254 A. D. "which occupies exactly the same detached position with regard to the Jama Masjid of Koel as the Kutb Minar does with respect to the Great Mosque of Delhi." This shows that it was the practice of the early Mohmedans to have only one Minar down to the middle of the 13th century.

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1 *Cunningham*, Reports. Vol I, p. 191.

Ewer[1] asserts that the *Minar* was never intended to form any part of the mosque. He says that (*a*) a Mazinah is generally joined to the mosque and that (*b*) the stairs of a *Mazinah* generally commence from the roof of the mosque. The Kutb Minar is at a distance of about 160 feet from the mosque and its stairs commence from the ground. It was, therefore, not meant as a *Mazinah.* He thinks that it was built as a monument to create a reverential awe in the Hindus for the supremacy of the Musalman faith.

Cunningham takes the minar to be a *Mazinah.* He says "The object of building this lofty column seems to me to be clear enough. The first Musalman conquerors were an energetic race, whose conceptions were as bold and daring as their actions. When the zealous Muhammadan looked on the great city of Delhi the metropolis of the princely Tomars and the haughty Chohans, his first wish would have been to humble the pride of the infidel; his second to exalt the religion of his

1 Asiatic Researches, Vol. XIV, p. 484.

prophet Muhammad. To attain both of these objects, he built a lofty column from whose summit the Muazzin's call to morning and evening prayer could be heard on all sides by Hindus as well as Musalmans. The conqueror's pride was soothed by the daily insult and indignity thus offered to the infidel, while his religious feelings were gratified by the erection of a noble monument which towered majestically over the loftiest houses in the city."[1]

According to Sir W. Hunter[2], "The original purpose of the minaret was doubt less as a Muazzin's tower, whence the call to morning and evening prayer might be heard throughout the city."

Crooke[3] also testifies to the Minar as being "the tower from which the call of prayer summoned the faithful to worship in the stately mosque close by."

The celebrated geographer, Abul Fida,

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1 *Cunningham*, Reports, Vol. I, p. 195.

2 *Sir W. W. Hunter*, The Imperial Gazetteer of India, Vol. IV, (Lon. 1885, 2nd ed.) p. 191.

3. *Brooke*, North-Western Provinces of India, 1897, p. 84.

recognises it as " the *Mazzinah of the Jami Masjid at Delhi.*"[1] But the most conclusive proof of this Minar being used as a *Mazinah* is to be found in the text from the Koran on the second story. " O true believers, when ye are called to prayer on the day of the assembly, hasten to the commemoration of God and leave merchandising ... ...The reward which is with God is better than any sport or merchandise, and God is the best provider."[2]

No more conclusive proof than the last can be brought forward in support of the view that the Kutb Minar was used as a *Mazinah.*

C—In memory of Kutb.

No writer, either ancient or modern, speaks of this *Minar* as having been erected or intended as a monument to perpetuate the memory of *Sultan Kutb-ud-din.* But, on the contrary, we have seen in Chapter VIII. that Sultan Altamash raised it in memory of *Kutb-ud-din Bakhtiar Kaki,* the

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1 *Thomas,* Pathan Kings of Delhi, 1878, p. 288 f. n.

2 *Fanshawe,* Delhi, Past and Present, 1902, p. 261, and *Sale's* Koran, Ch. LXII. (The Assembly), p. 411.

celebrated *saint* of his time. There is no denying the fact that the Minar was built by Altamash *during his reign* as the epigraphs marked E4 and T1 amply prove. To us, then, the motives that actuated Sultan Altamash to build such a huge edifice appear to be two.

Firstly, as a proof of the good will and the predilection that he bore the saint, he erected the Minar. By calling it the *Kutb Minar*, he thought, he honoured the great contemporary saint whom the then Moslem world revered and loved, and at the same time, he thought, he discharged a debt of gratitude and gratefulness that he owed his kind master, benefactor and father-in-law, Sultan Kutb-ud-din Aibak. He thus killed, as it were, two birds at one stone by erecting the Minar and styling it or allowing it to be styled the *Kutb* Minar.

Secondly, as we have observed elsewhere, he was the greatest Sultan of the Slave Dynasty. He had brought the greater part of Hindustan under his authority and his independence was first recognised by the Khalif of Bagdad. His predilection for the

saints as testified to by the writer of the Tabakat-i-Nasiri was translated into practice in the instance of the saint Kutb. He was, besides, considered the *Sun of the Religion* as his name signifies. In conformity with the practice of the Mohmedan Sultans of the time, *Shams-ud-din* Altamash, too, thought of handing down to posterity the glory and memory of his name, through some monument of enormous magnitude that would humble the pride of the infidel and at the same time exalt his دین (religion) of which he was the شمس (sun), when from its summit, the call of the *Muezzin* summoning the faithful to prayer every day could be heard on all sides by the infidel Hindus.

These are the probable motives which, in our opinion, actuated Altamash to raise the *Minar*. Thus, this monument of Altamash preserved the memory of both the *Kutbs*, the Sultan and the Saint, and also served the religious purpose, namely, the summoning by the Muezzin of the faithful to prayer from one of its boldly projecting balconies.

CHAPTER X.



Conclusion.

WE have investigated our subject at some length in the preceding chapters. Documentary and epigraphic evidence have been fully discussed and weighed and so conclusive do the inferences drawn therefrom seem to our mind as to leave little doubt to credit the statement of Shams-i-Siraj, Sultan Secunder Lodi and the inscriptions, that the Kutb Minar was raised by Sultan Altamash during his reign. In the absence of any proof or evidence to show that Sultan Kutb-ud-in was the rightful author of the Kutb Minar it is inconceivable as to why we should not believe such of the evidence as proves to the contrary.

According to Maulana Minhaj Siraj, Sultan Altamash was much impressed, during the early days of his youth, by the kindness of a good *Darwesh* who had enjoined him to regard devotee and

ascetics with respect and reverence. That this led him to be fondly devoted, in later life, to Khwaja Kutb ud-din Bakhtiar Kaki when he attained to kingship we have already seen and the conclusion adducible therefrom has also been discussed. But the fact of the absence of any epigraph on the minar purporting to say that it was built in his honour and also named after him is rather inexplicable. It is, we think, an unfortunate error of omission, which, perhaps, may preclude our hypothesis, though based on other strong and unrefutable evidence, from attaining the stamp of conclusiveness. But, even presuming that it does so, the absence of such an inscription, on the other hand, does not, in any degree, tend to support the view that Kutb-ud-din was its builder.

No Mohmedan historian ascribes the Minar to Sultan Kutb. Again, not one of the many inscriptions on the Minar can be pointed out to show that Sultan Kutb had any hand in the erection of the edifice. What is the numismatic evidence ? When

he could not strike coins bearing his own superscription owing to the drained state of the Imperial treasury at the time of his accession to the throne, how could he have at all conceived of so gigantic a structure ? When he inscribed on the Kutb Mosque, a contemporary architectural building of his *own erection*, the epigraph claiming it as his *own* piece of architecture, we fail to conceive as to why should he not have also done so with regard to the Kutb Minar, had that edifice also been one of his *own* erection ? On the other hand, we have ample testimony to attribute the foundation of the Minar to Sultan Shams-ud-din Altamash.

Shams-i-Siraj Afif, the author of the *Tarikh-i Firoze Shahi*, records in so many words that " Sultan Shams-ud-din Altamash raised the large pillar in the Masjid-i-Jama at old Delhi, the history of which is well known."

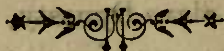
Even at so late a date as 1503 A. D., Sultan Secunder Lodi recognised the Minar as that of Shams-ud-din (Altamash) but not as that of *Kutb-ud-din*.

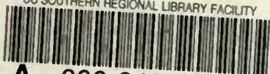
But the inscriptions E4 and T1 afford the most conclusive proof to claim for Altamash the authorship of the Minar, which is erronously and without the least justification attributed to his celebrated predecessor. The reading of both these epigraphs is distinct and lucid. It records that order was given for erecting the minar *during the reign of Sultan Altamash*, thus tolling the death-knell of the theory setting forth the claim of Sultan Kutb over its authorship.

We have noticed that no evidence is forthcoming-in fact, none such exists-to show that Sultan Kutb-ud-din was the originator of the Kutb Minar. If there is any argument or point calculated to support this view, it is the suggestive title of this edifice. But we have analytically discussed this point in our chapter on 'An Inquiry into the Appelation of the Kutb Minar' (Ch. VIII). We also find that the consensus of evidence, both of the Moslem chroniclers and of the epigraphs on the Minar, distinctly favours the view that Sultan Altamash was the

author of the Kutb Minar. When, on one hand, there is no evidence in favour of Sultan Kutb as the builder of the Kutb Minar and when, on the other, there is a host of such peremptory proofs ascribing the minar to Sultan Altamash, we cannot but adduce our conclusion from all the facts, the documentary, ephigraphic and numismatic evidence and the arguments set forth in the foregoing chapters that if there was any proper person entitled to claim the rightful authorship of the magnificient *Kutb Minar* it was none else than Sultan Shams-ud-din Altamash, perhaps the greatest Sultan of the Slave Dynasty, and the son-in-law and successor of Sultan Kutb-ud-din Aibak, the founder of that Dynasty, whose period of the occupation of India lasted for no less than 84 years. Altamash founded this Minar probably in 629 A. H. and named it after Kutb-ud-din Bakhtiar Kaki,a contemporary celebrated Mohmedan saint. If we agree in claiming for Altamash the authorship of this Minar, we can no more entertain the view

of the modern writers that it was built with the object of celebrating the capture of Delhi by Sultan Kutb-ud-din in 1193 A. D. We, therefore, are convinced that the famous Kutb Minar was raised by Sultan Shams-ud-din Altamish with a view to perpetuate the memory of both the *Kutbs*, the Sultan and the Saint, and to use it as a *Mazinah* from the summit of which the Muezzin's call to prayer would humble the pride of the infidel Hindus and exalt the Faith of Islam




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